Redefinition of the native near-native speaker of English

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Redefinition of the native/near-native speaker of English

by

Hern Yong Teo-Sherrell

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Department: English
Major: English (Teaching English as a Second Language/Linguistics)

Approved:

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1994
DEDICATION

Please hear me out:

To my mother:
Who says that an old girl will never learn new tricks?

To my father:
I have not been having a holiday all this time!

To my sisters:
Now you know why I have not been calling you as much as I wanted to.

To my lover, companion and beloved husband:
I promise to spend more time with you from now on (if you still want me back).
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INTRODUCTION

Most research studies have focused primarily on interactions between non-native learners with varying proficiencies and native speakers; rarely has the focus shifted to that between near-native speakers and native speakers, the reason being that many professionals in the field of ESL assume that ESL instruction is complete once a non-native speaker attains communicative competence. A near-native speaker of English is therefore perceived as a non-native speaker who has attained the highest level of proficiency possible (for a non-native speaker). He/She "cannot aspire to acquire a native speaker's language competence" (Medgyes, 1992, p.340) because "those who use English as their first language have an advantage over those for whom it is a foreign language. This advantage is so substantial that it cannot be outweighed by other factors prevalent in the learning situation" (Medgyes, 1992, p.342). Medgyes adds that "few come close to native competence, but sooner or later they are halted by a glass wall" (p.342). He rationalizes that "non-natives, by their very nature, are norm-dependent...Their use of English is but an imitation of some form of native use" (p.343).

Kachru, on the other hand, argues that the "distinction
between native and non-native speakers is not clear anymore" and that native speakers of English "seem to have lost the exclusive prerogative to control its standardization" (cited by Medgyes, 1992, p.340). In other words, the meaning of native competence or native-like proficiency escapes definition. Ferguson (1982) recommends that "the whole mystique of the native speaker and the mother-tongue should probably quietly be dropped from the linguists’ set of professional myths about language" (cited by Medgyes, 1992).

Edge (1988) and Selinker (1972) present a similar view to Kachru in that they perceive all English users as learners of English. They speak a "more or less advanced degree of interlanguage and therefore can be placed on an interlanguage continuum at any stage of the learning process. According to them, native speakers would be placed on the most proficient end of the continuum, followed by the near-native speakers, and by the non-native speakers/learners of different competencies (see Figure 1). Native speakers would therefore be regarded as "more accomplished users of English than non-native speakers" (Medgyes, p.342).

Medgyes, however, does not address the issue that many near-native speakers use English as their primary language of communication and that they do not possess the full knowledge of another language. Are these near-native speakers therefore
regarded as second language speakers? Perhaps not. Kachru, on the other hand, argues for the recognition of non-native, local/nativized varieties of English. Moreover, there is yet another issue that is not being addressed, that is, of the near-native speakers, whose goal is to achieve native proficiency in one of the established target languages, and

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{zero competence} \\
\text{native competence}
\end{array}
\]

\text{(a)}

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{zero competence} \\
\text{native competence} \\
\text{glass} \\
\text{wall}
\end{array}
\]

\text{(b)}

\text{Figure 1. a) Interlanguage continuum; b) Medgyes' modified interlanguage continuum}

not one of the localized varieties of English. A review of the classifications of speakers of English would help illuminate the differences (see Table 1).

The focus of this study is specifically on near-native speakers who aspire to become fully proficient in one of the established varieties of English.
In light of the ongoing debate about native versus non-nativeness, a few questions are raised, and it is within the scope of this study to address these questions:

1) What is the definition of a native or near-native speaker?
2) What role does standardization play in this debate?
3) Are there any perceptible and identifiable differences between native and near-native speakers?
4) Are non-native varieties of English very different from native varieties?

**Definition of Native and Near-native Speakers**

A native speaker of English is one whose English is his/her mother tongue or first language and it is implied "that the person is thoroughly proficient in it" (Walelign,
Strevens (1987) defines native speakers as "those for whom English is the primary language; non-native speakers are those for whom English is a secondary language" (p.60). In reality, however, there exists a continuum of competencies even among native speakers; thus, the implication that native speakers are fully competent in their first language does not always hold true, since "it is by no means unusual to find native speakers whose command is quite inadequate; and nonnative speakers who, due to the nature and duration of their exposure to the target language, are completely proficient" (Walelign, 1986, p.40).

Near-native speakers, on the other hand, are difficult to define. As Medgyes (1992) admits, defining them has "yielded inconclusive results at best" (p.341). In all areas of language proficiency, they are highly proficient; their knowledge of the language is equivalent to native speakers, and their competence is close to one of the established varieties of English. English may not be their mother-tongue, but it may be the language they are most proficient in and the primary language they use for all levels of communication. The speech patterns of these individuals do not identify them as native or non-native as they are not perceived to possess the speech patterns of either group. Thus, the focus of this present study is directed toward redefining the near-native
speaker, and to question the validity of a native/non-native speaker distinction.

**Interlanguage (IL) and Language Transfer**

Interlanguage studies have initially attributed the development of interlanguage systems to language transfer. Recently, however, studies have shown that interacting influences shape the course of developing interlanguage systems. Influences such as developmental processes, universal principles and social and psychological factors seem to have their strongest effect in the area of pronunciation, although they "vary in their degree of influence on the IL phonology in relation to the learner's proficiency" (Ioup & Weinberger, 1987, p.144). Since near-native speakers' proficiency is extremely high, the extent to which these factors influence the phonology of near-natives is not known.

In situations where English is a non-native variety or is institutionalized through use, it can no longer be regarded as a learner variety of its external, native speaker counterpart. It is accepted as a regional standard and the end point of second language acquisition is not the standard native speaker variety. Ritchie (1985) regards this form of interlanguage as a "petrification of the interlanguage" (p.17). A near-native speaker's speech does contain features of the speaker's native
language and of a non-native interlanguage. For example, this fossilization of features or "crystallization of certain interlanguage features" in a near-native speaker's interlanguage is influenced further by the speaker's empathy, identification and interaction with native speakers. Thus, the degree to which "fossilization is a permanent or temporary state" (Heubner, 1985, p.145) is currently in dispute.

**Standard and Educated English**

The "educated" or "standard" variety of English that is representative of the language of many near-native speakers has to be contrasted with the non-standard varieties of English (Kachru, 1976, p.231). Despite the diversity of non-native varieties of English, "two components of English are taught and learned without variation: these are its grammar and its core vocabulary". Standard English "is accepted everywhere throughout the English-using world, and it is spoken with any and every accent in the world....it is the educational model used throughout the world" (Strevens, 1987, pp.61-2). Yet, non-native varieties of English, also known as "new Englishes", diverge "in vocabulary, grammar, and above all in pronunciation" (von Shon, 1987, p.24).

"Educated" English such as Singapore or Indian English, however, differ very little from native varieties of English
They are closer to standard English in vocabulary and syntax except for some phonetic differences, which make them recognizably Singapore or Indian English. According to Kachru (1976), "educated English shows a wide range of permissible variation,... just as educated British or American English" (p.231) does. Near-native speakers have the privilege of being able to switch from one variety to another easily, within the interlanguage, when the need arises. It appears that the near-native speaker is well-equipped to break through the "glass wall" that Medgyes refers to, to "becoming" a native speaker; but whether slight phonetic differences will prevent the near-native speaker from attaining native speaker status, is a valid question.

Strevens (1981) defines standard English as a "particular dialect of English, being the only non-localised dialect, of global currency without significant variation, universally accepted as the appropriate educational target in teaching English; which may be spoken with an unrestricted choice of accent" (p.2) — standard English exists in vocabulary and grammar, i.e., it is not distinguishable by syntax or lexicon (Sato, 1989, p.262). If such is the definition of standard English, the near-native speaker has the chance of qualifying as a native speaker since standard English is not tied to one accent.
What standard English actually is is also thought to depend on "acceptance (mainly by the most influential people) of a common core of linguistic conventions, and a good deal of fuzziness remains around the edges" (Sato, 1989, p.263). For example, "a nurse and a waitress (both speakers of English as a native language) were heard recently in South Wales using the you was (e.g. You was sitting in the garden yesterday) and she haven’t (e.g. She haven’t got any salad left) forms....In the case of these two speakers, they would recognize the standard forms as standard, and their nonstandard forms may be performance errors, slips of the tongue" (Davies, p.449). If these speakers are called native speakers, then why isn’t a near-native speaker considered a native speaker? Are slips of the tongue of a near-native speaker considered a lack of proficiency? How can one differentiate the confusion between dialects and ungrammatical forms resulting from interference from one’s own language? As Christophersen (1973) states, "It should not be forgotten that so-called ‘native’ speakers often have surprising lacunae in their knowledge of the language, and yet we react differently to these. We may be amused: ‘Fancy not knowing that!’ But we let the mistake pass because, ‘After all, it is his own language!’ With a foreigner, the expectation that sooner or later he is going to slip up sometimes leads to the presumption of mistakes which do not
exist" (cited by Paikeday, 1985, pp.10-11).

Morley (1991) discusses a widely-held view that "few persons...can ever achieve native-like pronunciation in that second language" while "others believe never" (p.498). A very likely acknowledgement is that most near-native speakers would come close to having "a very good L2 accent". She reports Christophersen's (1973) study that a native speaker's reaction to a "too-perfect pronunciation in an L2 speaker" may be that of "a host who sees an uninvited guest making free with his possessions" (p.199) and "if he gained native-like competence he was suspect; if he did not gain it he was an object of linguistic ridicule" (Strevens, 1987, p.60). Thus, the "notion of perfection and native-like pronunciation may be imposing and perpetuating false standards, standards difficult to define, let alone uphold, because these are slippery concepts with basic questions of, What is perfect? and Which native speaker are we talking about?... since everyone speaks their language with an accent" (Strevens, 1987, p.56), not forgetting that "one's language is a central element in one's personal, national, and ethnic identity". The near-native speaker is currently a member of an outgroup; he/she is considered neither a member of a non-native variety of English nor a member of the native group. On the other hand, it is not easy for the native speaker to "come to terms with the variations
that occur in non-native speaker use of what the native speaker feels to be one's own language (Strevens, 1987, p.56).

**Accent and Intelligibility**

The distinction between native speaker and non-native intelligibility is sometimes difficult to separate since "native speakers were....found to be among the least intelligible speakers" (Morley, 1991, p.498). Native speakers have preconceived ideas about non-native speakers in general, including their accents, and "intelligibility may be as much in the mind of the listeners as in the mouth of the speaker" (Morley, 1991, p.499). Thus, having a foreign accent is not necessarily synonymous with unintelligible speech as the "rate of intelligibility failure from native accents to the non-native ones is also extremely high" (Bobda, 1991, p.29). However, Sato (1989) remarks that miscommunication across varieties cannot always be attributed to dialect interference as a result of dialect diversity (p.270) although linguistic differences between dialect and standard English can result in comprehension difficulties. Hence, the problem of intelligibility "is not necessarily one of intelligibility between the speakers of the native varieties of English and the non-native varieties of English. Rather, the question is one of recognizing that there is a cline in intelligibility
among the members of the speech community who speak different varieties" (Kachru, 1976, p.228). The native and non-native distinction is dependent on whether one wishes to stress similarities or differences, and not just of "linguistic features but of the whole way of life which each reflects and is a part of" (Strevens, 1987, p.59).

The typical American, according to Kachru (1976), adheres to linguistic purism and is intolerant of linguistic differences (p.221). This is apparent in "the shape of a family feud in which the members of the same speech community...have started evaluating attitudes toward the various dialect speakers of their variety of the language" (p.222) since the "homogeneity and speech uniformity of American society" (p.224) is highly valued, especially by the native speaker of American English.

**Attitudes and Stereotypes**

In "communities where linguistic prejudice is pervasive" (Ford, 1984, p.38), "accent can reduce chances for educational and occupational success if it serves to evoke a prejudicial attitude in the listener toward the speaker" (Ryan & Carranza, 1977, p.855). Institutions have been found to discriminate against near-native speakers by employing native speakers of English as opposed to near-native speakers on account of the
latter not having "the right accent"; and on the assumption that there is a "one to one correlation between being a native speaker and being able to teach that language well" (Walelign, 1986, p.40) - a kind of birthright mentality by virtue of being a native speaker. In addition, Walelign (1986) cites a comment by Strevens (1980) that "matters of language are liable to attract myths, legends, and old wives' tales, which in turn can lead to social action being taken on totally erroneous grounds" (p.40).

Moreover, as the numbers of non-native speakers multiply, the function of instructors is no longer to help students acquire merely a basic grasp of the language, but rather, to raise the level of proficiency among non-native speakers, so that they are able to succeed at higher institutions of learning. Thus, the training of a non-native instructor demands more than an adequate level of proficiency in English - it demands recognition from members of the ESL profession. If the identification of a native speaker from a near-native speaker cannot be discriminated, then there is hope for the non-native teacher trainee who aspires toward native proficiency and who seeks recognition and respect as an "accomplished" user of English (Medgyes, p.342), thereby increasing prospects for employment. "As matters now stand, a marginally qualified native speaker stands a better chance of
securing employment in Teaching English as a Foreign Language than even a well-qualified and experienced non-native speaker" (Walelign, 1986, p.41).

Present Study

It is evident that the distinction between the native and near-native speaker is not at all clear. My study attempts to reassess the distinction between the native and non-native division. This study is a step towards clarifying the native/non-native distinction, by identifying the linguistic aspects that "make linguistic proficiency the main criterion of native speakership" (Paikeday, 1985, p.30).

The purpose of this study is therefore to determine whether native speakers can distinguish between native and near-native spoken language based on phonological and syntactic cues. Specifically, it is designed to answer the following research questions:

1) Can native and non-native speakers classify users of English into native or non-native speakers?

2) Do native and non-native speakers use both phonological and syntactic information to distinguish a native speaker from a non-native speaker?

Another research goal of this study is to determine if native speaker judges can differentiate native speakers of
English of one established variety from native speakers of another variety.
LITERATURE REVIEW

The way we speak and how our listeners interpret our manner of speaking have important consequences for our interactions with other people (Ryan, et al, 1977, p.267); thus, how the near-native speaker is perceived would also have important consequences as well.

Previous studies have indicated that linguistic features of a non-native speaker's interlanguage and his/her physical appearance trigger foreigner talk. Linguistic cues include aspects such as syntax, phonology, organization of discourse (emphasis and topic), semantics and content; visual cues include appearance, elements of body language in oral communication (facial expression, gestures, eye contact, body posture, use of space, and clothing).

For the purposes of this study, phonological and syntactic cues are addressed.

Interlanguage Studies

A major controversy in interlanguage studies is the extent to which native language transfer plays a role in shaping a speaker's interlanguage grammar at a given stage of development. Empirical research in native speaker reactions to non-native speakers and speech forms range from interlanguage
to stable varieties of non-native varieties of English, but there have been few studies on near-native interlanguage.

Ioup (1984) claims that significant transfer is found at the phonological level in developing interlanguages. Ioup investigated syntactic and phonological errors of interlanguages and found that "even highly qualified linguists cannot distinguish foreign accents using material devoid of phonological cues", i.e., they cannot do so using syntactic cues (p.3). She found that native speaker judges were not able to identify language backgrounds of the subjects at better than chance accuracy. One explanation she offers is that at the syntactic level, developmental errors are mixed with any transfer errors which might exist" (p.8). She also cites Dulay and Burt (1974), and Richards' (1971) study, that most of the valid contrastive analysis evidence is "most predictive at the level of phonology, and least predictive at the syntactic level (p.2). It is already known that "non-native varieties of English deviate at the phonological, grammatical and lexical levels" (Kachru, 1976, p.226) from native speech as features from the non-native speaker's linguistic background are retained. Near-native speech, however, possesses only the minimal features of divergence from native speech, e.g., near-native sound and prosodic patterning, and accent is almost non-existent (Morley, 1991, p.502); therefore, transfer
processes may not be an influential factor in their interlanguage. In addition, as proficiency increases, the degree of influence on IL phonology decreases (Ioup and Weinberger, 1987, p.144) and as the "style becomes more formal, there will be fewer interference errors; developmental processes increase and then decrease". It is not known if and the extent to which near-native speech exhibit such errors.

**Accent Studies**

In a study by Neufeld (to test the critical period hypothesis), non-native informants were able to pass for native speakers of French with respect to articulatory and prosodic production. His study involved tape-recording seven non-native informants and three native-speaking control subjects reading a "carefully-prepared corpus in French" (1980, p.287). These tapes were then evaluated by native-speaking French judges. His results showed that five out of seven non-native speakers qualified as Francophones, leading him to conclude that "some adults can and do acquire native-like proficiency at the phonological level" (p.288). It would be reasonable to expect an even higher probability for near-native speakers to pass for native speakers.

Thompson (1991), in a study involving the pronunciation of Russian immigrants, declares that the retention of a high
level of proficiency in the immigrants' native Russian may contribute to the degree of accented speech. She concludes that "it is entirely possible that their English would have been judged to be accent-free" had they not "maintained a high level of proficiency in their native Russian" (p.200). Since near-native speakers are highly proficient in English, it is not known if low proficiency in their native languages would confirm Thompson's hypothesis.

In a follow-up study to Neufeld's 1979 study, Neufeld contradicts his earlier findings. He found that native-speaking Francophones were able to detect even the subtlest trace of an English accent in the speech of Anglophone Canadians who were highly proficient in French (Thompson, 1991, p.178). Thompson supports his findings by stating that "a listener usually does not need much time or linguistic sophistication to detect a foreign accent "as the pronunciation patterns found in non-native speech are perceived as different from those of native speakers of the language" (p.178). Tarone (1980) also found that "matters of accent may continue to mark speakers as non-native speakers long after finer points of syntax, semantics, or even style have been mastered" (p.140). She attributes the fossilization of phonology to two possibilities, namely, physiological habit formation where "lateralization of the cortical function, the
'flexibility' of the brain has diminished with age and this lack of flexibility has affected pronunciation...more than the syntax and semantics" (p.140).

Eisenstein & Berkowitz (1981) investigated the relationship between phonological deviances from educated (standard) English and intelligibility by testing ESL learners' ability to understand educated English, working-class English and foreign-accented English. They found that ESL learners could understand educated English much more easily than the other two varieties of English. It is not known, however, if native speakers would react in the same way to the degrees of deviance from the norm, and if such deviances would affect native/non-native identifications.

Native Reactions to Native and Non-native Speech

Other studies involving degrees of accent are studies which use voice cues to identify a speaker's social characteristics and personalities, and not the identification of native versus non-native speakers. Ryan, et al. (1977), for example, investigated college student responses to varying degrees of accented speech. They found that the college students were able to make fine distinctions among varying degrees of accentedness in rating a speaker's personal attributes and speech. These findings confirm a previous study
that Spanish accent features in spoken English are negatively stereotyped, and that the greater the prominence of these features, the stronger the stereotyping (p.271). To confirm their findings, Ryan, et al. cite a study by Ortego (1969) who found that "an accent can reduce chances for educational and occupational success if it evokes a prejudicial attitude in the listener" (p.268). Similarly, Anisfeld, Bogo and Lambert (1962) found that when bilinguals used Jewish-accented speech, they were judged to be "immigrants" and were rated less favourably. In addition, Alford and Strother (1990) cite Gallois and Callan's (1981) study which found that the Australian accent was rated less favourably than the Italian accent of female speakers (p.482) by native Australians.

In one specific study, Ryan (1983) details the difficulty of identifying native from non-native speech. She states that "when a native speaker of standard English listens to another speaker, he or she can identify the speech style used at varying levels of specificity with varying degrees of accuracy" (p.150). "Hence, a listener hearing a speaker with a Spanish accent may only have a global impression of nonstandardness, or of non-nativeness, or more precisely of a Spanish accent...On the other hand, the listeners may inaccurately judge the speech to be native nonstandard" (p.150) since "lower class native dialects overlap with many
non-native forms of English" (p.150). Such confusion has important implications for social class inferences, for instance, Eisenstein (1983) cites Ellis' (1967) study in which subjects could correctly identify the speakers' social status on the basis of pronunciation alone (p.163). Thus, many other studies such as Brennan & Brennan (1981) and Ryan & Danton (1975) identify the different forms of speech used in their studies as non-standard or non-native so that there is little confusion between what is native and non-native.

**Intelligibility Studies**

Many intelligibility studies have focused on interlanguage intelligibility of non-native speech; very few have focused on native speaker varieties. In one study by Smith and Rafiqzad (1979), the relative intelligibility levels of American standard English and eight non-native varieties were rated by listeners from eleven countries. "Unexpectedly, the native speaker was among the least intelligible" (p.169). Whether the level of intelligibility would have an effect on native /non-native identifications is not known.

Studies involving error gravity and its contribution to intelligibility have found that particular errors in non-native speech evoked different responses from native listeners. Tardif and d'Anglejan (1981) analyzed errors that
characterized French utterances spoken by native English speakers to determine the degree to which classes of errors interfered with intelligibility. Their results indicated that ungrammaticality had a negative effect on perceptions of accent and hence, intelligibility.

**Studies on Syntax**

Callary (1975) investigated the relationship between social status and specific syntactic variables. Fourteen syntactic items were considered. He found that judges could assign correct status to a speaker based on syntax alone. The speakers' linguistic performance was found to be more variable and complex within the higher social groups. Heubner (1985), in his study on the variability in interlanguage syntax, found that "some areas of the developing syntax appear to stop developing" while "other aspects of the same interlanguage continue to change" (p.157), such as the absence of the copula or tense marking.

Strevens (1981) reiterates that the ability to identify a person's geographical origins depends primarily on accent and less on grammatical cues. "Listening to a person speaking, pronunciation features provide evidence for geographical identification from the very first syllable and are pervasive throughout. Localized features of grammar, vocabulary...occur
much more as separate items, interspersed rather infrequently
through the piece of language" (p.5).

Tucker and Serafim (1979), and Tardif and d'Anglejan
(1981) found that perception of the deviance of grammatical
errors was exaggerated by the presence of non-native accent
(cited by Ryan 1983, p.155). Ryan argues that the native
speaker may use "the expected correlation between accent and
grammaticality as a yardstick for evaluating speech and that a
certain level of ungrammaticality may be tolerated for a given
level of non-native accent" (p.156). Thus, a certain level of
non-native accent may be helpful in preventing the
misidentification of the near-native speaker.

Comprehension Studies

Varonis and Gass (1982) investigated the
comprehensibility of non-native speech. In one of the
experiments they conducted, non-native speakers were tape-
recorded reading two sentences, one of which was grammatical,
and the other, ungrammatical. The sequence of the taped
sentences was then randomly ordered and played to native
speakers of English. These judges were asked to judge whether
the pronunciation of each speaker was 'good' or 'bad'. The
results showed that both grammar and pronunciation contributed
to comprehensibility - "grammaticality of the sentences has an
effect on the way a given non-native speaker's pronunciation is perceived" and sometimes "completely reversing decisions about this speaker's pronunciation" (p.120). However, the researchers raise several questions, one of which is: Why might there be an interplay between pronunciation and grammaticality? Perhaps, the study I am conducting will throw some light on this question.
METHOD

The present study was specifically designed to determine the extent to which native and non-native speakers of English can identify accurately whether a variety of speakers are native or non-native speakers of English, based on the following criteria:

1) phonological cues alone
2) syntactic cues alone
3) a combination of phonological and syntactic information

Speaker Selection (Subjects)

Ten near-native speakers and ten native speakers of English were chosen from a pool of thirty-one undergraduate and graduate students at Iowa State University, the University of Nebraska and the community. The search for the speakers encompassed two universities and the community because of the paucity of near-native speakers. Contacts were made through friends and acquaintances, the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) at Iowa State University, and by stopping passers-by who sounded near-native, or who spoke a different native variety of English on both campuses, and asking for their permission to have their voices recorded.
Near-native Speakers

The near-native speakers were tested to ensure that they had achieved near-nativeness. A near-native will be defined as a speaker whose mother-tongue is other than English, whose language proficiency is native-like, and whose accent contains slight traces of a foreign accent. Some sections from a retired version of the SPEAK Test (see Appendix A) were given to ensure that the non-native speakers' oral language proficiency was as close to being native as possible. The test was then rated by two experienced SPEAK raters at Iowa State University and the two raters' scores from the test were averaged (see Appendix B). Ten near-native speakers with the highest scores in the SPEAK Test were chosen for the study. Their average scores ranged from 293.37 points to the maximum 300 points. The 10 selected near-native speakers originated from Gambia, India, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Sri Lanka, and they reflected a variety of dialects and a range of near-nativeness. The ages of the six female and four male near-native speakers ranged from 21 to 45 years old with an average age of 30.2 years (see Appendix C).

Native Speakers

The ten native speakers were chosen from speakers representing different dialect groups. The composition of
native speakers was made up of 5 Americans (one of each from Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Oregon and Texas), 1 Scot, 2 New Zealanders, 1 Australian and 1 Canadian speaker. A native speaker of English will be defined as a speaker whose mother-tongue is English. A standard accent in their respective varieties was not required as the focus of this study is on nativeness/non-nativeness. The reason for the choice of five American speakers as opposed to two speakers was due to the fact that there are far greater numbers of American speakers than speakers of other established dialects in Iowa and Nebraska. Despite the small sample of native speakers, a variety of dialects was represented. The ages of the five male and five female native speakers ranged from 22 to 47 years old, with an average age of 28.6 years (see Appendix C).

Materials

The stimulus materials consisted of three sets of data collection (out of four sets). The first set consisted of 20 reading samples from the speakers reading a short one minute passage. The second set contained 20 spontaneous speech samples from the native and near-native speakers talking about an issue of current importance, and the third set comprised of 20 typed tapescripts that were directly copied from the spontaneous speech samples. The tapescripts were then reviewed.
by the researcher to ensure that any cues, e.g., lexical, which would have identified the origin of the speaker be eliminated.

A questionnaire requesting background and biographical data (see Appendices D & E) was also given to the speakers to fill out so that it could be used as an invaluable reference in analyzing data, such as the characteristics of the speakers misidentified, and for future research purposes.

**Native Speaker Judges (NJ)**

Out of thirty-one native speakers of English who voluntarily participated in the study, twenty-five were eventually selected (two males and twenty-three females). All the student judges were from three Introduction to Linguistics classes at Iowa State University. The selection procedure was based on the amount of linguistic experience the students had had previously. Based on the responses in the questionnaires requesting background information and other biographical data (see Appendix F) that the students filled out, two students were excluded from the study as one of them was linguistically experienced, and the other was not a native speaker. This step was taken to ensure that the students represented the average American with little linguistic experience or trained perceptive abilities. Thus, "naive" judges were chosen for
this study since a study cited by Thompson (1978) found that linguists were far more likely to perceive an accent than would ordinary persons (p.183), and experience with diverse groups/dialects might affect reactions, hence, results. Four other students were excluded as they had classified speakers of other native varieties of English as non-native speakers during the judging, and it was not possible to determine which native speakers had been mistakenly identified as non-native.

Most of the students were from the Mid-west, particularly Iowa, and they had varying degrees of contact with non-native varieties of English. All the students had learned or were learning a foreign language, primarily Spanish. Their ages ranged from 18 to 40 years of age with an average age of 22.6 years.

**Non-native Speaker Judges (NNJ)**

Out of a total of thirty-four non-native speakers of English who volunteered to participate in the study, twenty-nine were selected (12 males and 17 females). The students were from three Advanced ESL Composition classes at Iowa State University. They were asked to fill out a questionnaire providing data about their linguistic backgrounds and other biographical information (see Appendix G). Four students were excluded from the study as they did not attend both judging
sessions to complete all tasks. The fifth student was excluded as he did not follow instructions during one of the sessions, resulting in the identification of some speakers only.

All the students were from Asia, except for two, one of whom was from Europe, and the other, from Africa. These students had varying degrees of interaction with native speakers of English. Nearly half the number of students had had no contact with native speakers of English prior to coming to the United States. Their ages ranged from 18 to 31 years old, with an average age of 20.1 years.

Procedure

Collection of Stimulus Materials

Upon obtaining approval from the Iowa State University Human Subjects Review Committee, and the speakers' written consent to have their recorded speech used for research purposes, speech samples were then elicited from the speakers in two forms, namely, spontaneous speech and reading samples.

For the first part, all speakers were tape-recorded reading a formal passage. The aim of this task was to elicit only phonological information or errors that would help judges identify the speakers. The choice of passage was adapted from the text, Manual of American English Pronunciation, as it contained sounds which were considered difficult for non-
native speakers of English irrespective of their linguistic backgrounds (see Appendix H).

For the second part, spontaneous speech in response to a sequence of pictures was elicited from all speakers and tape-recorded (see Appendix I). This activity was designed to relax and prepare the speakers for the third activity, which required them to talk about an issue of current interest. The speech samples from this second activity were not used in the research, although speakers were not told about it.

For the third part, the speakers’ spontaneous speech was tape-recorded in response to the question:

What do you think is the major problem facing the world today?

This topic is not new; it was adapted from Ioup’s (1984) study to elicit phonological and syntactic errors. It was also chosen to standardize the topic and to allow speakers to apply their world knowledge as opposed to measuring specific background knowledge that might have biased results. Spontaneous speech was chosen to eliminate possible monitoring effects (Tarone, 1980, p.379) as the speech elicited was expected to be less cohesive to all speakers. Time was also limited to approximately one minute as Thompson (1991) states that native speaker judges are able to identify non-native
speech no matter how short the sample is.

The spontaneous speech samples collected in the third part were then transcribed. A typed tapescript of each of the speech samples was used to provide syntactic cues (see Appendix J). This technique eliminated phonological cues while retaining syntactic information.

Judging Sessions

The entries in each of the three sets of stimulus material were randomized. Furthermore, within each set, four tapes and four sets of tapescripts were made of the entries in randomized order to minimize ordering effects, i.e., each tape or set of tapescripts featured all twenty speakers' speech samples in a different order. (Pilot judging of the speech samples was conducted using two native and two non-native speaker judges to make sure that the actual sessions would run smoothly and to ensure that the transcribed tapescripts matched the spontaneous speech samples).

The judges were divided into native and non-native speaker groups. Each of the judges was given task sheets with numbers corresponding to the speech samples they were presented with and in the order the speakers were to be listened to or read. All judges performed the same tasks, although the order in which the speakers were heard were
different. They were not told the ratio of native speakers to near-native speakers. Instead, prior to each task, they were instructed to indicate whether each speech sample was native or non-native (not near-native), to give reasons for their decision, and to circle or underscore any identifying sound or quality that would help them distinguish between the native and non-native speaker.

The entire identification process for native speaker judges (NJ) took up several sessions over a course of one week, with different judges at each session. Each session required the judges to identify speakers based on the reading samples by listening to the speakers (Task A - Phonology), followed by the reading of the tapescripts (Task B - Syntax), and finally by listening to the spontaneous speech samples for phonological and syntactic cues to aid identification (Task C - Syntax and Phonology). The native speaker judges (NJ) performed all three tasks in one session.

The non-native speaker judges (NNJ), however, performed the tasks over two separate days in a series of sessions. The first two tasks were completed on one day and the third task on a different day because of time constraints.

Prior arrangements were made for the sessions to take place in quiet rooms so that sound quality could be preserved and interruptions few.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to determine whether speakers of English (NJ and NNJ) could differentiate between native and non-native speakers (NS and NNS), it was essential to compare the proportion of speakers who were correctly or incorrectly identified in relation to the type of speaker in each of the three tasks. Thus, the method of comparison used was the chi-square analysis to test the independence of the two variables, accuracy or correctness of identification, and the type of speaker. The chi-square test of statistical significance was also used because of the categorical nature of the data collected. This test was repeated for the three tasks.

Using 2 x 2 contingency tables, the data collected was tabulated and analysed for statistical significance using the chi-square analysis on a SAS program. A statistician from the Statistics Department at Iowa State University assisted the investigator by running the program.

Since 2 x 2 tables were used, the degree of freedom was calculated as d.f. = 1, and a significance level was set at p = 0.05. Thus, the critical value of the chi-square distribution was 3.84146. If the calculated value of $\chi^2$ was smaller than the critical value, this indicated that there was an absence of a relationship between the variables (the null hypothesis
is not rejected). This implied that the judges were not able to tell the native speakers apart from the non-native speakers. On the other hand, a large chi-square value greater than the critical value indicated that there was a relationship between the variables (the null hypothesis is false or rejected), implying that judges could distinguish between native and non-native speakers.

Overall Results

It was found that native speaker judges (NJ) and non-native speaker judges (NNJ) could tell the difference between NS and NNS on the basis of phonological cues alone (Task A) and on a combination of both syntactic and phonological information (Task C). They could not, however, identify speakers on the basis of syntactic cues alone (Task B). Table 2 shows whether the judges' accuracy in each task is significantly different than that predicted by chance, i.e., whether there is a relationship between the accuracy of identification by judges and the type of speaker.

From the table, it appears that in Task A, where speakers were asked to read a prepared passage, NJ were able to identify the speakers as NS or NNS without any difficulty ($\chi^2 = 36.867$) at $p < 0.05$. The NNJ were also able to identify speakers as NS or NNS in Task A at better than chance accuracy
(\chi^2 = 6.316) at p < 0.05. In Task C, where the spontaneous speech contains both syntactic and phonological cues, NJ and NNJ were also able to differentiate between NS and NNS at better than chance accuracy (\chi^2 = 21.985 and 26.055 respectively) at p < 0.05.

Table 2. Significance of Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judges</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Native</th>
<th>Non-native</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>\chi^2</td>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>\chi^2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonology (Task A)</td>
<td>36.867</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>6.316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax (Task B)</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td>0.371</td>
<td>0.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax and Phonology (Task C)</td>
<td>21.985</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>26.055</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Task B, where the spontaneous speech samples contain only syntactic cues, the NJ and NNJ were unable to classify speakers at a better than chance accuracy. Their responses were as predicted by chance (\chi^2 = 0.800 and 0.837 respectively) at p < 0.05.
Detailed Analysis

Phonology

The results seem to indicate that native speakers are able to classify a speaker as native or non-native on the basis of phonological cues at a better than chance accuracy ($p < 0.05$). Table 3 presents the percentage of speakers who were correctly or incorrectly judged as native speakers (NS) or non-native speakers (NNS) by native speaker judges (NJ).

Table 3. Identification of Speakers by NJ (Phonology)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>% Incorrect</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-native (NNS)</td>
<td>27.20</td>
<td>72.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native (NS)</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>93.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 36.867 \quad p = 0.000$

From Table 3, it is clear that NJ were able to identify 93.20% of the NS correctly and 72.80% of the NNS correctly. This indicates that NJ had virtually no problems in correctly identifying a NS using phonological cues despite the fact that a variety of NS speech was represented. There is also a great difference in the way the judges identified the NS from the
NNS. The NJ identified a much higher percentage of NS with greater accuracy than that of NNS (20.40% more). It is interesting that despite the relatively high percentage of NNS identified correctly, almost a third of the NNS speakers were still misidentified as NS (27.20%).

Non-native speakers are also able to identify whether a speaker of English is native or non-native on the phonological level at a better than chance accuracy at $p < 0.05$. However, the results prove to be non-significant at $p < 0.01$ (see Table 4). NNJ were able to identify 77.24% of NNS and 67.93% of NS correctly (this was non-significant at $p < 0.01$). Thus, the NNJ were slightly better at accurately identifying NNS than NS (9.31% more). It is also apparent from the table that there were a few NS (22.76%) and NNS (32.07%) who were misidentified by the NNJ.

Table 4. Identification of Speakers by NNJ (Phonology)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>% Incorrect</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-native, (NNS)</td>
<td>22.76</td>
<td>77.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native (NS)</td>
<td>32.07</td>
<td>67.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$x^2 = 6.316 \quad p = 0.012$
A comparison of judges was also made to determine if there was any significant difference in the way NJ and NNJ identified the speakers. A chi-square analysis showed that there was a difference in the way NJ and NNJ judged NS \((\chi^2 = 52.850; p = 0.000)\). According to Table 5, the NJ had almost no difficulty classifying the NS accurately, whereas the NNJ had more difficulty classifying the NS correctly. The NNJ incorrectly identified 32.07% of NS as NNS as opposed to 6.8% misidentified by NJ. This result indicates that native speakers are significantly better at correctly identifying NS of English using phonological cues than non-native speakers are.

However, from Table 6, there appears to be no significant difference in the abilities of the judges, both NJ and NNJ, at
identifying NNS ($\chi^2 = 1.420$) when phonological cues were
given. This indicates that both NJ and NNJ were equally apt
at identifying NNS, with only a 4.44% difference in accuracy.
Thus, it appears that native speakers and non-native speakers
of English do not differ in the way they identify NNS using
phonological cues.

Table 6. Identification of NNS (Phonology)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Incorrect</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-native (NNJ)</td>
<td>22.76</td>
<td>77.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native (NJ)</td>
<td>27.20</td>
<td>72.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 1.420$  $p = 0.233$

Syntax

Based on syntactic cues alone, native speakers are not
able to tell NS and NNS apart at better than chance accuracy.
In Task B, which contains only syntactic cues, the same NJ,
who could identify the speakers as NS or NNS using
phonological cues, had difficulty in identifying speakers
using syntactic cues alone. They were unable to identify
speakers at better than chance accuracy ($\chi^2 = 0.800$; $p =
Thus, from Table 7, it is clear that the NJ could not easily identify speakers as NS or NNS since nearly half of the NS (48.80%) and slightly more than half of the NNS (52.80%) were identified incorrectly.

Table 7. Identification of Speakers by NJ (Syntax)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>% Incorrect</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-native (NNS)</td>
<td>52.80</td>
<td>47.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native (NS)</td>
<td>48.80</td>
<td>51.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = 0.800 p = 0.371

Similarly, non-native speakers are not able to correctly classify speakers as NS or NNS based on syntax alone at better than chance accuracy (χ² = 0.837; p = 0.360). Like the NJ, both NS and NNS were incorrectly identified by the NNJ with 51.03% of NNS and 54.83% of NS incorrectly identified (see Table 8).

A comparison of judgements made by NJ and NNJ showed that there was no significant difference in the way both types of judges identified NS, although NJ accurately identified 6.03% more of NS. Still, NJ and NNJ were not able to judge the
Table 8. Identification of Speakers by NNJ (Syntax)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Native Speaker Judges</th>
<th>% Incorrect</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-native (NNS)</td>
<td>51.03</td>
<td>48.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native (NS)</td>
<td>54.83</td>
<td>45.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 0.837 \ p = 0.360$

identities of NS and NNS correctly based on syntactic cues, given the low percentage of correctness in judgements (see Table 9).

Both NJ and NNJ were also equally matched in their inabilitys to identify NNS accurately. They identified less than 50% of NNS correctly (see Table 10). Thus, it appears

Table 9. Identification of NS (Syntax)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Native Speakers (NS)</th>
<th>% Incorrect</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-native (NNJ)</td>
<td>54.83</td>
<td>45.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native (NJ)</td>
<td>48.80</td>
<td>51.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 1.954 \ p = 0.162$
Table 10. Identification of NNS (Syntax)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judges</th>
<th>% Incorrect</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-native (NNJ)</td>
<td>51.03</td>
<td>48.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native (NJ)</td>
<td>52.80</td>
<td>47.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 0.168 \ p = 0.682$

that native speakers are no better than non-native speakers at identifying NS and NNS when presented with syntactic cues only.

**Syntax and Phonology**

When both syntactic and phonological information are present, native speakers are able to differentiate between NS and NNS at a better than chance accuracy. In Task C, which combines both syntactic and phonological cues, NJ were able to differentiate between NS and NNS without much difficulty (see Table 11). However, the NJ identified a greater percentage of NS correctly than they did for NNS (17.20% more). This indicates that they were better at judging NS more accurately than for NNS. It is apparent too, that although NJ could classify speakers into native and non-native categories, they
misidentified exactly 30% of NNS and 12.80% of NS. It would be interesting to find out if the NJ consistently misidentified the same NNS as they did in Task A where only phonological cues were present.

Table 11. Identification of Speakers by NJ (Syntax and Phonology)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>% Incorrect</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-native (NNS)</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>70.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native (NS)</td>
<td>12.80</td>
<td>87.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 21.985 \quad p = 0.000$

Non-native speakers are also able to differentiate between the NS and NNS accurately using both syntactic and phonological cues. From Table 12, it can be seen that NNJ were better at correctly identifying NS than NNS. They appeared to have problems identifying NNS correctly, the difference being 20% more NS than NNS were identified accurately. In addition, close to half the NNS were misidentified (43.45%). This is a substantial percentage difference compared to that for the identification of NS.
There is also a significant difference in the way NJ and NNJ identified the NS. The NJ were better able to identify the NS than the NNJ were. The NJ identified 10.65% more of the NS correctly compared to the NNJ (see Table 13).

Table 12. Identification of Speakers by NNJ (Syntax and Phonology)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>% Incorrect</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-native (NNS)</td>
<td>43.45</td>
<td>56.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native (NS)</td>
<td>23.45</td>
<td>76.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 26.055 \quad p = 0.000 \]

In identifying NNS, there is also a significant difference in the abilities between the NJ and NNJ (see Table 14). The NJ identified 70% of NNS accurately as opposed to 56.55% accurately identified by the NNJ, a difference of 13.45%. It appears that the NNJ had greater difficulty identifying the NNS. Furthermore, it seems that the NNJ accuracy at identifying NNS declined when both syntactic and phonological cues were given than when phonological cues only were provided (see Table 15). Thus, NNJ might depend more on syntactic cues and less on phonological cues in identifying NNS when
Table 13. Identification of NS (Syntax and Phonology)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judges</th>
<th>% Incorrect</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-native (NNJ)</td>
<td>23.45</td>
<td>76.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native (NJ)</td>
<td>12.80</td>
<td>87.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 10.089 \ p = 0.001$

presented with a task involving both syntactic and phonological information, whereas their identification of NS improved slightly when the NNJ were presented with both syntactic and phonological cues.

The NJ, however, seemed to be relatively consistent in

Table 14. Identification of NNS (Syntax and Phonology)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judges</th>
<th>% Incorrect</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-native (NNJ)</td>
<td>43.45</td>
<td>56.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native (NJ)</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>70.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 10.391 \ p = 0.001$
Table 15. Identification of Speakers in All Tasks by NNJ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Native Speakers (NS)</th>
<th>Non-native Speakers (NNS)</th>
<th>%Incorrect</th>
<th>%Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonology</td>
<td>32.07</td>
<td>67.93</td>
<td>22.76</td>
<td>77.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td>54.83</td>
<td>45.17</td>
<td>51.03</td>
<td>48.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax and Phonology</td>
<td>23.45</td>
<td>76.55</td>
<td>43.45</td>
<td>56.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16. Identification of Speakers in All Tasks by NJ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Native Speakers (NS)</th>
<th>Non-native Speakers (NNS)</th>
<th>%Incorrect</th>
<th>%Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonology</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>93.20</td>
<td>27.20</td>
<td>72.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td>48.80</td>
<td>51.20</td>
<td>52.80</td>
<td>47.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax and Phonology</td>
<td>12.80</td>
<td>87.20</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>70.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
their identifications of all speakers regardless of whether syntactic cues were present or not (see Table 16). Thus, it appears that NJ relied more on phonological cues than on syntactic information when identifying speakers.

**Characteristics of Most Misidentified Speakers**

Since both NJ and NNJ consistently misidentified approximately 30% of the NNS in two out of the three tasks, namely, phonology (Task A) and syntax and phonology (Task C), it would be interesting to find out if the same NNS were identified inaccurately in both of the tasks.

From Table 17, which shows the number of misidentifications each NNS receives from NJ, it appears that NJ consistently misidentified NNS# 2 and NNS# 8 and possibly either NNS# 6 or NNS# 7. The NNJ, on the other hand, misidentified NNS# 1, NNS# 2 and NNS# 8 (see Table 18). It seems that the two NNS who were misidentified by all judges, irrespective of whether they were native or non-native, were NNS# 2 and NNS# 8.

The two speakers who were identified incorrectly share a few qualities. They are both females in their thirties and they come from countries where English is of a non-native variety, namely, Singapore and The Philippines. They learned English formally when they were five years of age, although
the Singaporean speaker was exposed to a non-native variety of English at home prior to starting kindergarten. English is the medium of instruction and the primary language of communication in their home countries.

English is the speakers' primary language of communication as well. In fact, the Singaporean speaker regards English as her native language. Both speakers believe that

Table 17. Number of Misidentifications of NNS by NJ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker#</th>
<th>Phonology</th>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th>Syntax and Phonology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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they have a native accent, primarily that of an American accent. They have lived in the U.S.A. for more than 10 years (the Philippino speaker - 13 years; the Singaporean speaker - 10.5 years), and they have maintained some proficiency in their native languages.

Table 18. Number of Misidentifications of NNS by NNJ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker#</th>
<th>Phonology</th>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th>Syntax and Phonology</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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</table>
As for the NS, NJ misidentified between 6% and 13% of NS in two out of the three tasks. For the NJ, the most consistently misidentified NS were NS# 7 for phonology (Task A) and NS# 6 for syntax and phonology (Task C – see Table 19).

Table 19. Number of Misidentifications of NS by NJ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker#</th>
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<th>Syntax</th>
<th>Syntax and Phonology</th>
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</thead>
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</table>
The NNJ, on the other hand, incorrectly identified between 23% and 32% of NS. The NS consistently misidentified was NS# 6 (see Table 20).

The two native speakers who were consistently misidentified originate from New Zealand. They are both females in their early twenties. NS# 6 has been in the U.S.A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker#</th>
<th>Phonology</th>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th>Syntax and Phonology</th>
</tr>
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</table>
for a few months and NS# 7 has been residing in the U.S.A. for three and a half years. NS# 6 is a monolingual speaker, whereas NS# 7 has some knowledge of another language.

**The SPEAK Test as a Predictor of Oral Language Proficiency**

Although the two raters gave different scores to the NNS, the two NNS who received the full score of 300 points from both raters were NNS# 2 and NNS# 7. These speakers were among the most misidentified NNS, especially NNS# 2. Except for NNS# 1 and NNS# 8, the other consistently misidentified NNS (#1 and #6) also received very high average scores which were close to 300 points; therefore, ranking behind NNS# 2 and NNS# 7 (see Appendix B). Thus, it is clear that the SPEAK Test is a fairly good indicator of proficiency levels.
CONCLUSIONS

The research study was conducted to determine if native speaker judges (NJ) and non-native speaker judges (NNJ) could differentiate between native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS) of English on the basis of three tasks involving phonological cues, syntactic cues, and a combination of syntactic and phonological cues. It was found that out of the three tasks, both NJ and NNJ were able to identify speakers as NS or NNS when phonological cues were present rather than when they were absent.

These results confirm previous studies that the effect of interlanguage transfer is in the area of pronunciation, despite the high level of proficiency of the near-native speakers, and that fossilization is a permanent state for some of the near-native speakers, at least.

Nevertheless, the fact that a few NNS were misidentified as NS warrants more investigation into the characteristics of these near-native speakers who were able to pass as native speakers, thereby determining the qualities that could possibly raise the status of some near-native speakers to that of native speakers; hence, giving some basis for re-defining the native/non-native distinction. As it stands now, most near-native speakers will be considered non-native speakers.
because of the deviations from established varieties of English in terms of phonology.

It is clear that for a few near-native speakers, they have broken through what Medgyes (1992) calls the "glass wall" to becoming a native speaker. Their interlanguage systems may have been influenced by their interaction or empathy with native speakers of English, since the two consistently misidentified near-native speakers have lived in the U.S.A. for more than 10 years; and by their low retention of their proficiency in their native languages. The misidentifications also bring into light the issue of the varying degrees of near-nativeness; therefore, making the definition of a near-native speaker even more complicated.

Furthermore, the results confirm that relatively naive native speakers are sensitive to small degrees of variation from the norm in terms of phonology, especially to deviations from the American norm. The average American may adhere to linguistic purism, or is not exposed to other phonetic variations other than the American standard since the two most misidentified near-native speakers spoke with an American accent, and the most misidentified native speaker spoke with a New Zealand accent. Thus, it would probably be unlikely for speakers of non-native varieties of English, such as Indian and Singapore English to pass as native speakers of English on
the basis of phonology, although their non-native varieties are "gradually achieving 'legitimacy'" (Richards, 1982; cited by von Schon, 1987, p.24).

The fact that NJ and NNJ were unable to differentiate speakers on the basis of syntactic information indicates that there is some form of standardization in terms of syntax among native varieties and between native and non-native varieties of English. It seems that syntax remains fairly constant, and that the near-native speaker's syntax is indistinguishable from the native speaker's syntax. Besides, since all the speakers in the study are university-educated speakers, it is not unexpected that there would be little difference in syntax. Thus, the level of education might have contributed to the high percentage of misidentifications in the task involving syntactic cues. It also confirms previous studies that "educated" or standard English is not tied to phonology, and that fossilization is not "a kind of rigor mortis which sets into every appendage of the interlanguage simultaneously" (Heubner, 1985, p.157).

Although the NNJ were able to differentiate between the speakers on two of the three tasks (but not significantly so at p < 0.01 in phonology), they had problems identifying the near-native speakers correctly. These results highlight the discriminating demands placed by ESL students on the
instructor who is non-native but is highly proficient in the language. Since non-native speakers cannot identify a high percentage of near-native speakers based on syntax and phonology, then it should not matter if their instructors are near-native speakers of English. Moreover, according to Medgyes (1992), "there exist other variables...that have a bearing on teaching practice...such as experience, age, sex, aptitude, charisma, training, and so on play a decisive role in the teaching/learning process" (p.346). Thus, "the question 'Who's worth more: a native or a non-native?' does not make sense, and may be conducive to forming wrong judgements about the differences found in their teaching practice" (p.347).

In addition, it seems that non-native speakers tend to depend more on syntax and less on phonology in identifying near-native speakers (whether correctly or incorrectly identified) when the task involves a combination of syntax and phonology; as a result, slight phonetic deviations from the native norms may be ignored because of the complexity of the task or as a consequence of the emphasis on grammar lessons in their ESL classes.

From this study, it appears that the dichotomy between native and non-native speakers is justified, that native speaker deviations from the norm are distinctly different from non-native foreign accents since "mistakes made by nonnative
speakers are supposed to be of a different kind from mistakes made by native speakers" (Paikeday, 1985, p.39). However, the fact that there were some speakers (both native and non-native) who were incorrectly identified calls into attention Paikeday’s comment that a "native speaker should not only be a competent user of the specified language but his speech should not betray an accent that reminds you of another language. By the same token, in a more narrow sense, a native speaker of one dialect would be a nonnative speaker of another dialect" (1985, p.25). Hence, Paikeday (1985) argues for the adoption of the "two senses" of native speakers: "a person who has a specified language as the mother tongue or first-learned language", or "one who is a competent speaker of a specified language and who uses it idiomatically" (p.10) since these competent speakers possess "insight" into the language (p.13). A third sense of the concept "native speaker" could also include the educated speaker of a non-native variety of English. As Lowenberg (1986) claims, the "consideration of only native speaker of the established varieties will no longer be sufficient in future descriptions of 'the English language'" (p.14).

The present study should be replicated to determine if similar results would be observed. Future studies could also be controlled for specific variables, such as selecting
linguistically experienced judges, naive judges of different professions, e.g., businessmen; and judges of different native varieties of English. Near-native speakers of only one linguistic background could also be chosen for another study.

The questionnaires used in this study should serve as a useful tool to determine the characteristics of each near-native speaker and to relate future findings to the specific characteristics. The information will shed light on the environment and circumstances in which the speakers learned English and the extent to which these features are accurate predictors of native pronunciation norms or grammatical accuracy.

Further research could be conducted to determine if exposure to different varieties of English and identification with particular social classes would influence identification patterns, and if native speakers base their judgements on individual or dialectal cues. Other variables, such as stereotyping and attitudinal factors (which have not been considered in this present study) could be explored to find out if they yield similar results. Visual cues such as appearance and body language could also be investigated using videotaped speech samples, and studies involving perception could be conducted to determine if "nativeness of accent would vary as a function of one's ability to perceive segmental and
suprasegmental aspects of that language" (Schneiderman, Bourdages and Champagne, 1988).
REFERENCES


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Marek Brabec, who patiently helped me to understand and interpret statistical data

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Ioulia and Harsha, Steve and Greg, for their precious help

My dearest love, Chris, for whom the frequent trips I made to be with him have been worth all the love we share together: Without your invaluable insights, my love, there would have been no thesis
APPENDIX A: THE SPEAK TEST

SECTION ONE

In this section, you will be asked to read a printed paragraph aloud. First, you will be given one minute to read the paragraph silently to yourself. Then, you will have one minute to read the paragraph aloud. You will be scored for proper pronunciation and clear speech. Allow yourself one minute now to read the following paragraph silently.

During cold winters, people must be extra careful to prevent excessive exposure to cold and serious loss of body heat. Layers of relatively light, loose clothing give better protection than one thick, heavy item. Between each layer, there's a film of trapped air, which, when heated by the body, acts as excellent insulation. Tight clothing should be avoided because it does not leave room for the trapped air. When people exercise or work hard, layered clothing becomes particularly important. As they move about, they may get overheated. If a person becomes too warm, layers of clothing can be removed during the active time and put back on when the exercise is stopped. By wearing layers of clothing during activity a person can avoid an unnecessary chill.
SECTION TWO

In this section, you will see partial sentences and will be asked to make complete sentences using these parts. Look at example X.

Example X: When the library opens .......

There are a number of possible completions for this sentence. You could say, for example:

When the library opens, I will return the book. OR,
When the library opens, I will go there to study. OR,
When the library opens, I will look for a new novel.

These are only sample completions. There are many other possibilities.

You may complete each sentence in any way you wish. Try to make the completed sentence meaningful and grammatically correct.

Now, complete each of the ten partial sentences that follow.

1. If she would read the full report ......
2. It will always be necessary ......
3. When the plane lands ......
4. Whenever your friend comes to visit ......
5. Before the game started ......
6. In order to finish the assignment ......
7. By saving our money ......
8. While I was waiting for the bus ......
9. Although many people liked the movie ......
10. Because of the cold weather ......

SECTION THREE

In this section, you will see a series of pictures that tell a continuous story; you will be asked to tell the story that the pictures show. Begin your story with "One day last month..." and you will have one minute to tell the story. Speak as accurately and in as much detail as you can. Now, study each of the following pictures silently, beginning with picture number 1 and going through picture number 6.
In this section, you will look at a picture and answer a number of questions about the picture. There are many different ways the questions can be answered correctly. You will have one minute to study the picture silently before you hear the questions. Be sure to say as much as you can in the time allowed (15 seconds) for each question. First, study the picture below silently.

Questions:
1. Where is this scene taking place?
2. What is the dog doing?
3. What is going to happen to the lamp on the table?
4. How could this scene have been prevented?
SECTION FIVE

In this section, you will be asked to give your opinion on topics of international interest and to describe certain objects. Be sure to say as much as you can in the time allotted for each question. Remember, this is simply a test of spoken English. When it is scored, the scores will be based on the way you express your ideas, not the actual ideas.

1. Describe a bicycle in as much detail as you can.

2. Describe the things you think make up a perfect meal.

3. What is the best way to prevent world food shortage?
SECTION SIX

In this section of the test, you will see a class schedule and you will be asked to explain this schedule. Imagine that you are the teacher, meeting your class for the first time. Remember to include all important details as you describe the schedule to your class. You will have one minute to study the schedule silently.

| Class Lectures: | Mondays and Wednesdays  
| Anderson Hall  
| Room 302  
| 9:00-10:00 a.m. |
| Laboratory: | Fridays  
| Johnson Hall  
| Laboratory A  
| 3:00-5:00 p.m. |
| Final Examination: | Wednesday, December 1  
| Anderson Hall  
| Room 302  
| 9:00-10:00 a.m. |
| University Holidays: | Thursday, November 23  
| Friday, November 24  
| No Classes |
| Textbooks: | An Introduction to College Chemistry,  
| C. Clauss and C. Whitehead, Oxford University Press, 1986  
| Fundamentals of Chemical Equations,  
| B. Mathews, Harvard University Press, 1987 |
# APPENDIX B: SPEAK TEST SCORES

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<tr>
<th>Speaker#</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Singapore</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>299.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>India</td>
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<td>8</td>
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**APPENDIX C: DISTRIBUTION OF SPEAKERS**

(1)

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Total: 10 4 6
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS

1) Where were you born?

2) When did you start learning English?

3) For how long did you study English?

4) What languages were spoken in your home?

5) Where did you spend your childhood?

6) What languages were spoken in your neighbourhood?

7) Under what circumstances did you learn English? (in school?)

8) Who were your English teachers? Were they native or non-native speakers of English?

9) What is the primary language of communication in your country?

10) What other languages/dialects do you still speak? How proficient are you in them?

11) What social group do you perceive you belong to?
12) How much contact did you have with native speakers of English before coming to the USA? In which country did this interaction take place? With native speakers from which countries? And for how long?

13) What do you regard as your native language?

14) What is your primary language of communication? Explain why.

15) How would you rate your general language proficiency in English?

16) How would you rate your oral proficiency?

17) Do you think you have a native or non-native accent?

Personal Data

1) Age:

2) Gender:

3) Program of Study and Area of Specialization:

4) Length of time already in the U.S.A.:

5) Length and date of previous stay in the U.S.A. (if applicable):

6) TOEFL Score (if any):
APPENDIX E : QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NATIVE SPEAKERS

1) Where were you born?

2) Where did you spend your childhood?

3) Do you consider yourself a native speaker of English? Explain why.

4) What do you consider is your level of language proficiency in English?

5) Do you think you speak English with an accent? Specify which accent.

6) What social group do you think you belong to?

7) Have you been to other English-speaking countries? Specify which countries and length of stay.

8) How much interaction did you have with speakers of those countries?

9) What other languages/dialects do you still speak? How proficient are you in them?

Personal Data

1) Age:

2) Gender:

3) Program of Study and Area of Specialization:

4) Country of permanent residence:

5) Length of stay already in the U.S.A. (if non-U.S. resident)?
APPENDIX F: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NATIVE SPEAKER JUDGES

1) Do you consider yourself a native speaker of English?

2) What is your definition of a native speaker of English?

3) What is your definition of a non-native speaker of English?

4) What do you consider is your level of language proficiency in English? Circle the answer that applies to you.
   a) excellent   b) good   c) average   d) fair   e) poor

5) Do you think you speak English with an accent? Specify which accent.

6) What social group do you think you belong to? (e.g. working class, middle class, etc.)

7) Which native varieties of English do you come into contact with? (e.g. Southern English or dialect, Mid-western English, New York accent, British English, etc.)

8) Have you had any contact with speakers of English from other countries?

9) Specify the countries or language backgrounds.
10) How much interaction did/do you have with these speakers?

11) Have you ever had a course in Linguistics before this semester? If so, please specify the title and level.

12) Have you studied another language? If so, please specify which language and the length of your study.

Personal Data
1) Age:
2) Gender:
3) Program of Study and Area of Specialization:
4) Place of Birth:
5) Country of permanent residence:
6) Length of stay already in the U.S.A. (if non-U.S. citizen):
APPENDIX G: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKER JUDGES

1) Where were you born?

2) What is your native language?

3) When did you start learning English?

4) How long have you been studying English?

5) What is your general language proficiency in English?

6) What is a native speaker of English?

7) What is a non-native speaker of English?

8) How much contact did you have with native speakers of English before coming to the USA? In which country did this interaction take place? With native speakers from which countries? And for how long?

9) How much interaction do you have with native speakers of English now?

Personal Data
1) Age:

2) Gender:

3) Program of Study and Area of Specialization:

4) Length of time already in the U.S.A.:

5) Length and date of previous stay in the U.S.A. (if applicable):

6) TOEFL Score (if any):
APPENDIX H: READING PASSAGE

When students from another country come to study in the United States, they have to find the answers to many questions, and they have many problems to think about. Where should they live? Would it be better if they looked for a private room off campus or if they stayed in a dormitory? Should they spend all of their time just studying? Shouldn't they try to take advantage of the many social and cultural activities which are offered? At first it is not easy for them to be casual in dress, informal in manner, and confident in speech. Little by little they learn what kind of clothing is usually worn here to be casually dressed for classes. They also learn to choose the language and customs which are appropriate for informal situations. Finally they begin to feel sure of themselves. But let me tell you, my friend, this long-awaited feeling doesn't develop suddenly — does it? All of this takes practice.
APPENDIX I: PICTURE SEQUENCE
APPENDIX J: TAPESCRIPTS

#1

Native __

Non-native __

Why? ___________

Um — I guess what concerns me the most — um — on a daily basis I mean, is reading the newspaper and watching the news on TV — is — um — civil wars? There are so many civil wars going on um — recently — um — the one in Somalia — the one in, the recent one in Rwanda — and of course Bosnia and Herzegovina. There was one in Kuwait, um — there's — wel — massive, there's massive killing going on there out there....

#2

Native __

Non-native __

Why? ___________

Well, I feel the major — problem facing the world — one of the major problems facing the world today I should say is — the environment and the lack of concern for it. Um — I admit I am just as guilty. Um — I don't consider — reusing — um — plastic products, you know, I use paper products like it grows on trees, well, paper products are made from trees I I understand and um — I realize, I should say — and I I guess I- I'm just speaking for myself I guess in this case and I think that reflects, you know, the attitude of a lot of people. I just — um — let me rephrase that — well, let me pause for a minute.
OK one of the major problems facing the world today, in my opinion, is overpopulation. Um— we are— taxing our environment in ways that's never been taxed before. Um— many people especially in the United States, when they talk about overpopulation, they immediately think of third world countries— China, India, African countries where the population rate is very high. However, I remember reading in the December nineteen eighty-eight issue of National Geographic that— if I can re— remember the quote, numbers per se should not be the sole criteria for overpopulation. Instead, it should be the— um— the impact an individual has on his or her environment....

What do I think is the major problem facing the world today?— the major problem facing the world today. I would say that the major problem facing the world today is that people don't care— about— things long term or things outside a very small— uh— a very small— what's the word, very small— realm of of influence or or field of influence, primarily uh— anything outside what affects themselves directly or a few people that they care particularly about....
The major problem facing the world today would have to be the social atmosphere that people live in. Um, with all the different countries in the world having different languages as their main language, there can be a lack of communication between all the people, and this can cause problems between all the different nationalities. These cultural differences and cultural barriers which also makes the relationship between different people very difficult because their life, everybody’s lifestyle is different in different countries. Um – even though people do say that the world is getting smaller because of the air transportation and things like that, it's still very difficult bringing people together because people can still feel isolated in certain parts of the world. A lot of the people in today’s environment, as well a lot of the people – um have become so focused ...

Well – in my opinion, the major problem facing the world today would be – the fact that we– way too many people – on this planet, and I think that there is just not enough of room for us to interact and to be civil to one another – and so – that’s my major problem right now, trying to figure out how we can decrease the population which is not decreasing right now, so – people have to make choices of whether they want to have families or to expand – their families simply because there’s way too many people.
What do you think is the major problem facing the world today? Well I wish it was just one but as I see it, there's three major problems that are going to come to some kind of head within our lifetimes I would guess. The first would be pollution and the destruction of the environment. The second would be overpressure of population, and the third would be ethnic and racial prejudice. I think solving all of these is going to be necessary for a happy and future continuation of the world and I have a very real interest in that as I have an eleven-year old son who is going to be growing up, is already growing up into this world, and I would like it to be a reasonable place for him to live.

I think the major problems facing the world today are the two big Ps. The first and the foremost is the population, and secondly, the pollution. Population in a global in the global sense is a very important topic because day by day we come to hear that the population of this place has increased, of that country has increased, but when you talk about the global sense, it's a very important, it's a burning topic. Why is it so? Because we're running out of natural resources and uh, and few years from now these have to be replenished otherwise the world will come to an end - that's for sure ....
The major problem that is facing the world today is basically the environmental degradation and overpopulation. Uh, actually both of them are related. Environmental degradation and overpopulation are very, very well-related indeed. A lot of millions of people or billions of people that we have, the environment and the planet could not support all those people. Therefore if there is more people then, then they tend to degrade the environment and cut down the trees for food and fuel and so forth. And so the major problem that we facing now, that we need to address first is overpopulation and then eventually we could get the environment uh - in the right order.
Uh um, one of the major problems facing the world today is - gender and equality - um - this is obviously between males and females and - this exists in no matter what country you go to - um, males - are considered to be - um supreme you know, and superior to females, um - and this is shown through, for as an example I would like to talk about sports, um - if you look at the television, there's more, a lot of probably about eighty percent perhaps of sport is dedicated towards male sports and - therefore of course it is fifty and - fifty-fifty women to men ratio - so therefore there is the same amount of people playing - women sport as there is playing male sport....

Um - one of the major problems in the world today I think is that uh - people are too power hungry. They think that - the only way they can get happiness is - by getting, the more happy they' ll be is by having more power - um I think this is the main problem with a lot of other problems in the world today, I think this is - what - causes a lot of uh racism problems, a lot of sexism problems - um people are always fighting for - for more power, um - a lot of um - of world peace problems that' ll from trying to gain power, um - people aren't taking the time....
I think the main problem facing the world today is overpopulation. Um - if we - keep cont- if we continue to - if our population continues to grow at the rate it is growing, soon we will um - use up all of our resources and mass starvation and famine could easily start. In many developing countries this is already a problem, and I think a major way to maybe solve this, is um - through education - of the the people who live there and and also of people who don't live there because um - everyone in the world needs to - help themselves out now that um things in the way that they are, and uh - that's about it.

The major problem facing the world today is a dwindling amount of resources and the ever growing uh population. And with that causing a problem, wh- how they will cau- cause a problem is that - as countries begin to become richer and poorer - the populace in when poor countries is going much fatter- fa- faster rate than the so-called first world countries which puts an ever increasing demand on the limited number of resources. So what happens when - the resources in those burgeoning so-called third world countries run out and they must turn to these first world countries but with nothing to offer, and only a huge population that is undereducated, underfed and full of fury, how will things change, will become - a- a better place and I don't think in today's society is that facing, not coming to terms with that, and come to grips with the fact of - how do we allocate these resources now, control the population...
OK, I think - lik- there are lots of major problems facing the world today, but I think that - the common root of them all is the fact you know, the economic disparity between lik- the countries in the first world and the less developed world or eve- eve- or even in the classes of the less developed countries and ( ) between the different classes, and you know, this leads to, you know, increase in crime, increase in - diseases and stuff like that and even - for example in certain countries, it leads like - rises in different like uh religious movements - and that which are not in the interest of the rest of the world as well and this leads to the the acquiring of more and more, you know, the building up of nuclear arsenals and stuff like that....

A major problem facing the world today is population. With population comes - problems like shortages of food, deforestation in order to plant more grains to - um - to feed the people, water problems, um - to provide uh safe drinking water to the population, electricity shor- shortages, and then uh - pollution due to products that are developed to uh - for the consumer. All these products uh - come in packaging and the packaging pollutes the environment. Then there's the problem of housing and uh - again deforesting land in order to provide uh adequate housing for the people.
What do I think the major problem facing the world today is? I think uh—we have many many problems facing the world today and it could be at different levels. It could be economic, it could be—um—I don't know, population, it could be uh—wha—whatever, environmental issues. So I think every, every—um—problem in the world could be justified as a major problem depending on—who's talking. But um—for myself, I think that it's a philosophical thing. I think for me the major problem facing the world today is a diminished respect for people and life....

I think the major problem facing the world today is uh the environment and the population, the the number of people uh inhabiting this uh—uh planet is increasing uh—uh in a—a big way and uh—the resources are of course limited, the land resources are limited, the sea resources are limited, a—and of course we are uh exploiting these resources at a very fast rate and d—depleting the uh, the earth's uh—um uh resources in that way and tha—that probably is a major problem facing the world—uh how to—uh live—in harmony with the environment....
96

#19

Native ___

Why? ________________

Non-native ___

There's a lot of problems facing the world today but the one that um - we do talk about is - about the wars that are - that are taking place and I think - the main cause of them is - because of the power struggle between those who have and those who have not (long pause). You have a lot of those people who do have something, they're the ones who relinquish that - hold that they have so that the other people could share with them. As a result, we have a lot of wars fighting going on and the example is the problem that happened in Rwanda and wh- - millions of - hundreds of thousands of people have died just because of two - I won't say two people but just because two groups who wouldn't want to share the power...

#20

Native ___

Why? ________________

Non-native ___

What do you think th- major problem facing the world today. Well - in my opinion, the world is facing a variety of problems. I guess the - the value of human decency, respect for the fellow fellow person regardless of race, creed, sex, what have you - it seems to be a major breakdown in respect for one another and love - seems as though everyone is trying to - make it - make it to the top - while taking everybody else down if they can or if they have to. I guess a lot of people fail to realize that - you're only going to be on this planet once....